

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 07697 242033Z

64

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8009

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 7697

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ECON, AR

SUBJECT: PLANNING MINISTER DESCRIBES FUNCTIONS OF NEW MINISTRY

REF: BUENOS AIRES 7308

1. EMBASSY ASSUMES DEPARTMENT HAS ALREADY SEEN (VIA FBIS) TEXT OF PLANNING MINISTER DIAZ BESSONE'S SPEECH LAST NIGHT (NOVEMBER 23). THRUST OF HIS EXPLANATION OF NEW MINISTRY'S FUNCTIONS WAS ESSENTIALLY ALONG SAME LINES AS THAT GIVEN EARLIER TO AMBASSADOR HILL AND EMBOFFS (SEE REFTEL): (A) MAIN TASK WAS TO REVITALIZE NATIONAL VALUES AND DECIDE WHAT KIND OF COUNTRY ARGENTINES HAVE WANTED. THIS WOULD FORM BASIS, THEN, OF NATIONAL PROJECT; (B) MINISTRY WOULD ALSO ATTEMPT TO COORDINATE GOVERNMENT SHORT-TERM (ONE YEAR) AND MEDIUM TERM (FIVE YEAR) PLANS AND PROJECTS AND MAKE CERTAIN THAT THEY WERE CONSISTENT WITH NATIONAL PROJECT. AS EXAMPLE OF NEED FOR PLANNING, DIAZ BESSONE POINTED TO URBAN SPRAWL (AND HE IS CERTAINLY RIGHT THERE).

2. INTERESTINGLY, DIAZ BESSONE INSISTS (RATHER DEFENSIVELY) THAT HIS MINISTRY'S ACTIVITIES WILL IN NO WAY BE PREJUDICIAL TO PRIVATE ENTERPRISE NOR WILL THOSE ACTIVITIES INFRINGE UPON THE FUNCTIONS AND AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY OF OTHER MINISTRIES--LEAST OF ALL OF THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY. HAVING SAID THAT MUCH, HOWEVER, DIAZ BESSONE WENT ON TO TALK ABOUT PREPARATION OF
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PAGE 02 BUENOS 07697 242033Z

THE BUDGET AS A EXAMPLE OF VITAL SHORT-TERM PLANNING, WITH

CLEAR IMPLICATION THAT HIS MINISTRY WOULD HAVE SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT. GIVEN THAT MEMBERS OF ECON MINISTRY HAVE TOLD US WITH SOME IRRITATION THAT DIAZ BESSONE'S GROUP HAS BEEN TRYING TO TAKE BUDGET FUNCTION AWAY FROM ECON MINISTRY, DIAZ BESSONE'S INSISTANCE THAT HE DOES NOT WISH TO STEP ON OTHER PEOPLE'S TOES IS NOT LIKELY TO BE TAKEN TOO SERIOUSLY.

3. COMMENT: DIAZ BESSONE'S PRESENTATION WAS LONG, DULL AND CONFUSED. AFTER WATCHING IT ONE VETERAN AMERICAN NEWSMAN COMMENTED: "IF THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF DIAZ BESSONE IN ACTION, THEN HE MAY NOT BE A THREAT TO ANYONE AFTER ALL."
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